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University Relations, "Senior Elise Porcher receives SDA Award of Excellence" (2011). *University Relations News Archive*. Paper 589.
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Senior Elise Porcher receives SDA Award of Excellence

Summary: The art student's fiber art piece was accepted for the juried Confluence: 2011 International Surface Design Association Student Members' Exhibition.

(August 3, 2011)-University of Minnesota, Morris art student Elise Porcher, Lake Elmo, was honored with the Surface Design Association (SDA) Award of Excellence for "Great Grandmother's Letters," a fiber art piece accepted for the juried Confluence: 2011 International Surface Design Association Student Members' Exhibition. Porcher was the only undergraduate student to receive an exhibition award.

Porcher notes that her work is inspired from a variety of sources, "like a string of thoughts, a continuous flow of ideas." "Great Grandmother's Letters" was created in response to an assignment in Professor of Studio Art Jenny Nellis's Media Studies: Artist's Books course and an independent study course with Associate Professor of Studio Art Jess Larson.

"Jenny was increasing our knowledge of what can qualify as a book," remembers Porcher. "It was this that inspired me to use fabric, or rather, thread. Since taking Fabrics as Forms, a course taught by Jess, "I have been interested in learning how to make lace, more specifically, tatting. I knew that my great grandmother did tatting and that both my mother and grandmother tried but could never quite do it the same way as my great grandmother—a lost art form for my family. What I didn't know until visiting my grandma was that she had kept all of my great grandmother's tatting shuttles and half-finished lace pieces."

Porcher continues, "Most of what I knew about my great grandmothers' lives before I was born was told to me by my mother and grandma or was shown to me from my mother's inherited paternal great grandmother's memory book, which is a collection of letters describing important and memorable events in her life. These letters, written in cursive handwriting, made me think of combining my two great grandmothers' gifts of tatting and journal keeping into lace."

Porcher's SDA exhibition piece is created from layers of letters processed through a computer and then worked through free machine embroidery into lace. "Before taking Fabrics as Forms," she says, "I had never imagined using fabric as a medium. Seeing all the possibilities and inspirations from fabric was mind-blowing. The medium is an old one, but I feel that it has so much new possibility."

Expressing herself through art for as long as she can remember, Porcher has also studied floral design, commercial arts, ceramics, technical drawing, arc welding, 2-D and 3-D design, sculpture, life drawing, printmaking, screen printing, book making, and sustainable costuming. She majors in both studio art and biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris. A senior, she is currently studying abroad in Australia.

The SDA is an international community engaged in the creative exploration of fiber and fabric. Surface design includes the coloring, patterning, and structuring of fiber and fabric. It involves the creative exploration of processes such as dyeing, painting, printing, stitching, embellishing, quilting, weaving, knitting, felting, and papermaking. The SDA's

mission is to promote awareness and appreciation of the textile arts.

“Great Grandmother’s Letters”

Detail

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